

these laws that stocked the earth with an endless variety of trees and plants and flowers, and with myriads of animal forms; it was the working of these tireless laws that peopled the earth and all the isles of the sea, with numerous races of wild, ferocious and savage men, and it was the operation of these same laws that transformed our savage ancestors into barbarians, and these in turn into partially civilized men, and now after the lapse of tens of thousands of years cultured men and cultured women have finally made their appearance upon our beautiful earth.

These same everlasting laws of differentiation and development which constitute the law of progress, and that have diversified the surface of the earth with mountains, rivers and seas, and clothed it with plants, with forests and flowers and peopled it with myriad forms of animals and men, are constantly at work on the inner world or the world of mind, developing and strengthening the moral sense, expanding the understanding and enlightening the reason, and as sure as the night follows the day, and as sure as the law of progress is an eternal process, just so sure will Gods and devils and the priests of superstition disappear from all civilized nations, and be remembered only as relics of savagery and barbarism.

When the sun of this glorious day reaches the zenith our little planet, now groaning under mountains of sorrow will become a happy home for all the children of men, and the whole human race will sing songs of gladness far sweeter than Beethoven's symphonies—the pagodas and joss-houses and cathedrals that are now used for the worship of heartless Gods and malicious devils, will be replaced with rock-built temples dedicated to justice, to liberty, to science, to humanity, and to the good, the beautiful and the true, and in the midst of this most marvelous civilization made possible by the death of superstition, will break forth a universal anthem that will reverberate around the whole circumference of the globe, like the chimes of ten thousand mighty bells, hung in the blue canopy above us.

The glorious work which the Freethinkers of the world are now doing, to hasten the oncoming of this happy day in the world's history, is infinitely grander than any victory that was ever won on the bloody fields of war.

The heroes who died at Marathon and Thermopylae, at Lexington and Concord, at Yorktown and Gettysburg, deserve to be commemorated in poetry, in history and in song, but they cannot be compared with the heroes of Rationalism who with no weapon but the bloodless battle-axe of Reason, are now driving from our beautiful earth man's first and last and only enemies, the Gods and devils, and the heartless priests of superstition.

Your organization was not an accident, but owes its origin to the operation of the beneficent universal law of progress which has worked unceasingly through a beginningless past and will continue its ennobling work through all the ages of an endless future, slowly it may be, but surely in the end; our duty then under the beneficent law of progress is to learn to labor and learn to wait—to be patient and constant—to be faithful and hopeful—these are the lessons we learn from the study of Nature and history; the beautiful earth on which we live covered with an infinite diversity of lovely forms, with oceans and lakes, with mountains and valleys, with myriads of floral and animal forms was once covered for millions of years with the trackless and desolate waters of a primeval sea, but in due time the earth was heaved from its ocean bed and dry land appeared—for millions of years again it was the universal scene of steaming tropical forests, made hideous by the universal howl of wild beasts innumerable, but in due time under the cosmic law of progress man appeared upon the scene, and began to figure in the great drama of life—previous to his appearance all were fish and birds and reptiles, insects, beasts and quadrupeds—during the last few hundreds of thousands of years the law of progress has transformed the savage man into the dignified and lofty stature of a great philosopher—it has changed cannibals and devil worshipers

into disciples of peace and philanthropy—it has dethroned the heartless Jewish Jehovah and completely extinguished the fires of his eternal hell—it is rapidly filling the mind of man with love and justice and mercy.

The universal cosmic law of progress enfolds all Nature in its mighty arms, and forever bears all things onward and upward, and it will continue its ennobling and transforming work until the whole world blossoms as the rose, and it will in due time lift all races of men into a state of happiness so beautifully portrayed, by all the great apostles of mental liberty, who have lived and died for humanity.

The roots of the cosmic law of progress are deeply embedded in the bosom of matter, and as matter is both infinite in space and time, the foundation of our hopes is absolutely secure, and we can already clearly discern the white winged angel of peace and happiness, spreading her lovely wings over our beautiful earth.

Had it not been for the law of progress the fiery mists that once filled universal space, could never have been transformed into the magnificent sun and his royal family of shining planets, and chaos could never have been evolved into the wondrous cosmos.

Had it not been for the law of progress which ever bears all things onward and upward, the whole earth today would still be involved in a mantle of darkness, and the whole human race would still be living in the dens and caves of savagery; the railroad, the steamship, the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the sewing machine, the reaper and mower, the trolley car, the electric light, and all the multitudinous arts and industries that now fill the world with comfort, joy and happiness, would still be locked up in the womb of the future.

Had it not been for the law of progress every philosopher and every scientist in the world today, would be seen swinging at the end of a rope, or they would be slowly put to death in the foul air of filthy dungeons; our homes would still be filled with ghosts and imps and devils; the awful shrieks and cries of agony of witches and wizards would still fill the air, as the serpents of fiery flame crept around their bodies, in obedience to the commands of Jehovah; the fires that reduced to ashes the bodies of Huss and Jerome and Wyckliffe and Savonarola would be rekindled, and this magnificent assembly of grand men and noble women would soon be reduced to ashes by flame and fagot, at the hands of the priests of superstition.

Had it not been for the cosmic law of progress that inheres in every atom of matter, the priest and the prophet, the soothsayer and the exorcist, the miracle-monger and the pulpiteer, would still usurp the dominion of the earth, and the whole human race would still be hopeless and helpless in the loathsome and slimy coils of the serpents of superstition.

Had it not been for the cosmic law of progress, Copernicus and Galileo, Servetus and Bruno, Hypatia and Spinoza, Voltaire and Paine, Jefferson Franklin and Ingersoll—the real saviours and redeemers of the human race—would never have spent all their days and sacrificed their lives fighting the Gods and ghosts and priests of superstition; they are the priceless fruits of the eternal laws of evolution and development; through all the centuries that are yet to come, they will remain embalmed in the grateful hearts and affections of all the generations that are yet to be, and their memory will be revered, when the last man standing on the distant shore of time shall sing the requiem of earth.

Until man appeared upon the scene, hundreds of thousands of years ago, the law of progress worked continuous and without obstruction and hindrance, but when man came, fraud, ambition and tyranny were born, and for the first time made their appearance in the long history of the world; universal history now begins with the organization of the priesthood, man's first and last and only enemy.

To resist the cosmic law of progress and to make slaves of the tolling millions now became the supreme end and endeavor of